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ABSTRACT

The report of the Independent Commission on the Future of the State University of New York is presented, based on public hearings, review of staff studies, visits to the 18 campuses, and interviews with personnel at the State University of New York (SUNY), other colleges, and state officials. Major findings include: SUNY is the most overregulated university in the nation; and in research and graduate education, SUNY's achievement is well behind that of leading public universities in other states and leading independent universities in New York. Information is provided on the academic standing of SUNY's research and graduate education, the status of its libraries, research funding, student recruitment, minority enrollment, the community college system, health sciences centers, and statutory colleges. Recommendations are offered concerning: strengthening SUNY's contribution to the state, management flexibility, SUNY's structure, and finance. It is concluded that a fundamental change in SUNY's structure is required and that it should be restructured as a public benefit corporation under the SUNY Board of Trustees. Individuals who were interviewed, offered testimony, or contacted during campus visits are identified. (SW)

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THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

The Challenge and the Choice

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Report of the
Independent Commission on the Future of the State University

January 16, 1985

HE 020 #16

SUMMARY

The State University of New York was created just 36 years ago to offer equal educational opportunity to qualified New Yorkers who would otherwise be denied access to higher education. With 370,000 students now enrolled in SUNY, New Yorkers can take justifiable pride in their university's progress.

Yet two disturbing conclusions stand out when SUNY is compared with leading public universities in other states, and they form the major findings of this report:

1) In research and graduate education—areas that are crucial to the future well-being of New York's economy—SUNY's achievement is well behind that of leading public universities in other states and leading independent universities in New York.

2) The Commission finds that SUNY is the most over-regulated university in the nation. Given the vast array of laws and practices that govern New York state agencies, a fundamental and basic change in SUNY's structure is required to allow the university to carry out the functions for which it was created. This Commission has concluded that SUNY should be restructured in the coming year as a public benefit corporation, under the SUNY Board of Trustees.

At present, SUNY lacks the flexibility to compete with leading universities in other states in recruiting—and retaining—top faculty and administrative talents. Over-regulation weakens SUNY and deprives New York of benefits that other states realize from their public universities. It also results in waste and inefficiency in the use of state tax dollars.*

In light of this Commission's major findings, New York's promise that SUNY will provide a truly equal opportunity for higher education in the public sector must today be judged unfulfilled.

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* The Commission does not fault any official or group of officials for the over-regulation of SUNY. Instead, we believe it to be an unintended consequence of SUNY's evolution as a traditional agency of state government, an organizational form that SUNY has now outgrown. Recently, and laudably, New York's governor and legislature have taken some initial steps to address this problem.

RESEARCH AND GRADUATE EDUCATION

SUNY's shortcomings in research and graduate education are due in part to SUNY's relative youth. Other states have had more than 100 years to develop their state university systems. Certainly no state has accomplished as much *in so short a time* as has New York in building SUNY. Yet SUNY must be judged by the contribution it can make to today's needs, and to future needs, not by the special circumstances of its past.

The economy of New York requires a state university system that can serve, in full partnership with the independent sector and with the City University of New York, as a magnet for industry and a force for community and economic development. In many particular instances, SUNY has demonstrated its ability to perform these diverse roles.

However, SUNY's evolution as a force for statewide economic development in providing quality education, research, and public service has been stunted for almost a decade. Statewide economic difficulties have played their part. But even more important has been a failure to recognize that a public university system regarded as a national leader can have a tremendous impact on economic development.

To the extent that SUNY's activities have been stunted by over-regulation and inadequate support, the victims have been each and every citizen of New York. This is so because a weakened SUNY means a weakened tax base, less vitality in the state's economy, and lost opportunities to stem migration from New York.

OVER-REGULATION

New York state has handicapped both itself and SUNY over the years by relying upon traditional governmental mechanisms that are not suited for the management of higher education. SUNY is a university whose trustees, central administration, campus presidents, and faculty lack much of the essential authority they need to fulfill their responsibilities

in teaching, research, and public service. As a result, SUNY is not able to compete adequately with other public universities in many areas that matter, including:
—planning for the future;
—recruiting and retaining top faculty and administrators;
—adapting to changing curricular needs;
—allocating resources for maximum efficiency;
—securing research funding; and
—soliciting support from nongovernmental sources.

The regulation of SUNY is designed to secure the same accountability required of such New York state agencies as the Department of Motor Vehicles. But it is a triumph of technique over purpose. While intended to secure accountability for public expenditures, it has undercut accountability for SUNY's paramount public purposes—namely, the provision of quality education, service, and research. The state has entrusted its university with the education of a generation of New Yorkers, but state government does not trust SUNY's board of trustees, chancellor, or campus presidents with even the most elementary administrative decisions concerning the institutions they have been asked to manage. Sadly, and unintentionally, New York state has become an extreme example of what not to do in the management of public higher education.

Unanimously, the members of this Commission believe that no great university, and no very good one, has been built or can be built under the state rules that presently govern the administration of SUNY. There is a clear choice before New York: The state can decide that New York is not going to get a public university of high quality. Or it can change the rules.

We have explored other alternatives but believe that the form of the public benefit corporation provides the most feasible way to give SUNY's board of trustees, chancellor, and state-operated campuses the responsibility and authority that a university requires and that their counterparts in other states possess.

SUNY has the potential to become a great public university, one that is at least the equal of the best public universities in other states, as well as an equal partner of New York's independent universities and CUNY. During the next

decade, SUNY can become better, without necessarily growing bigger, by providing true equality of educational opportunity in graduate and professional education, and by becoming an equal partner with other educational institutions in the cultural and economic development of the state. However, this Commission cautions New York state and SUNY that achievement of these goals in the future depends upon what is done today. It is our considered judgment that SUNY stands no chance to realize its potential unless there is change drastic enough to permit SUNY to carry out the functions for which it was created.

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FOREWORD

The Independent Commission on the Future of the State University of New York came into being in February 1984. The Commission was created by SUNY's chancellor, Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., with the concurrence of the SUNY Board of Trustees, to encourage citizen participation in deliberations concerning the future course for SUNY in an era of "constrained resources" and an "increasingly restrictive regulatory environment."

The 15 commissioners, who served without remuneration, are leaders of broad and diverse experience in the fields of government, business, labor, and education. Most are based in New York state, but five of the Commissioners have experience as university presidents in other states. Funding for the Commission was provided by grants from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Ford Foundation, Ford Motor Company Fund, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

In the months following February 1, 1984, the commissioners:

- conducted approximately 190 interviews, meeting with SUNY personnel and those affiliated with other educational institutions, and with officials in the executive and legislative branches of New York state;
- held public hearings in New York City and Albany;
- reviewed more than 50 staff studies; and
- visited 18 SUNY campuses.

As a voluntary body charged with forming an overview for policy guidance rather than providing detailed operating plans, the Commission did not undertake the depth of technical analysis typically found in studies prepared by outside consultants or state-financed investigative commissions. The combined judgments of the commissioners draw on their years of experience in management roles in business, government, and higher education.

All of the commissioners are familiar with the management of large organizations.

Apart from the interviews, staff studies, and hearings, the commissioners benefited from extensive discussions with each other. During those discussions, it became clear to the members that no final report of reasonable size could discuss all of the many subjects raised during the interviews and public testimony. Public submissions to the Commission, together with the staff papers, will remain on file in the SUNY archives in Albany. The commissioners wish to express their gratitude to all who shared their views with the Commission during the course of this inquiry.

January, 1985

Figure 1

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK BY CAMPUS TYPE

The University Centers
1 Albany
2 Binghamton
3 Buffalo*
4 Stony Brook*

The Health Sciences Centers
5 Downstate Medical Center
6 Upstate Medical Center

The Colleges of Arts and Science
7 Brockport
8 Buffalo
9 Cortland
10 Empire State
11 Fredonia
12 Geneseo
13 New Paltz
14 Old Westbury
15 Oneonta
16 Oswego
17 Plattsburgh
18 Potsdam
19 Purchase

The Specialized Colleges
20 College of Environmental Science and Forestry
21 Optometry
22 Maritime College
23 Utica/Rome

The Agricultural and Technical Colleges
24 Alfred
25 Canton
26 Cobleskill
27 Delhi
28 Farmingdale
29 Morrisville

The Statutory Colleges
30 College of Ceramics at Alfred
31 College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell
32 College of Human Ecology at Cornell
33 School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell
34 College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell

The Community Colleges
35 Adirondack
36 Broome
37 Cayuga County
38 Clinton
39 Columbia-Greene
40 Corning
41 Dutchess
42 Erie
43 Fashion Institute of Technology
44 Community College of the Finger Lakes
45 Fulton-Montgomery
46 Genesee
47 Herkimer County
48 Hudson Valley
49 Jamestown
50 Jefferson
51 Mohawk Valley
52 Monroe
53 Nassau
54 Niagara County
55 North Country
56 Onondaga
57 Orange County
58 Rockland
59 Schenectady County
60 Suffolk County
61 Sullivan County
62 Tompkins Cortland
63 Ulster County
64 Westchester

*Includes Health Sciences Center

THE NEED FOR A QUALITY PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN NEW YORK STATE

SUNY's infancy is over. With 38 percent of the state's enrollment, SUNY is a crucial part of New York today and a key component of its future. The trouble is, many New Yorkers make the mistake of viewing their young state university as only a "supplemental" or "second-class" system. To consider SUNY as "supplemental" is to consign it to permanent inferiority. New Yorkers should not tolerate this self-inflicted wound.

—Harold Enarson,
president emeritus, Ohio State University

With 370,000 students, 43,000 full-time employees, and 2,200 buildings, the State University of New York is the nation's largest public university system, serving 38 percent of the higher education enrollment in New York state. Surprisingly, given its size, SUNY is also the nation's youngest system of public higher education: the statewide system was created in 1948.

While there is much to be done, this Commission believes that in just 36 years New York and SUNY have accomplished more than has any other state in a comparable time. Further, this Commission believes that SUNY's positive impact upon New York state is already greater than New Yorkers generally recognize. We expect that SUNY will in the future receive greater public recognition as perceptions in the state catch up to the reality of SUNY's accomplishment.

In undergraduate education, SUNY has managed to attract an impressive number of the state's best students. For example:

- The average combined SAT scores for freshmen at SUNY-Binghamton, 1,123, is nearly identical to the average at the University of California at Berkeley, 1,124.
- At the Albany university center, the average combined SAT score of the entering class is 1,108.
- Average combined SAT scores for entering classes at five additional SUNY campuses exceed 1,050, a score higher than that achieved at a great many of New York's middle-size private colleges. The five: SUNY's university centers at Buffalo and Stony Brook, the Maritime College, and the arts and science colleges at Purchase and Geneseo. SUNY also operates statewide remedial programs for educationally and economically disadvantaged students; about 30,000 students annually participate in these programs.

There is less breadth and depth of accomplishment in SUNY's graduate programs. The scale of SUNY's research enterprise is well behind that of other public university systems. Since research capacity and graduate programs are the most commonly used measures of university quality, educators generally do not yet consider SUNY to be a "world class" university. Nor is SUNY recognized as a national leader among the states' public universities.

SUNY has the potential to become one of the greatest of public university systems, but in the judgment of this Commission, *SUNY is not yet good enough.* We base this conclusion on: 1) assessment of post-baccalaureate education and research at SUNY compared with that of leading public university systems in other states; 2) the fact that SUNY has not yet become the equal of other leading public universities in attracting industry and enhancing the tax base of its state; and 3) our judgment that the future will demand even more from all institutions of higher education.

More than ever before in its history, the U.S. is becoming a "knowledge-based" society. Rapid change has become a constant feature of social and personal development. The ability to learn, and to continue learning throughout life, has today become as important as the right to vote in defining citizenship and the pursuit of happiness. In the words of sociologist Daniel Bell, the university has become "the paramount institution" in "post-industrial society."

The very well-being of the state—as measured by the capacities of its citizens, the state's prospects for economic growth, and the development of knowledge about the environment and other state issues and needs—depends upon the well-being of the state's institutions of higher education, including SUNY.

Given the stakes, it is the clear responsibility of the university's leaders, and the elected leaders of New York state, to seek quality for SUNY commensurate with the university's great size and potential for service to the state.

SUNY'S INITIAL MISSION: OPENING DOORS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Justifying SUNY's creation were findings of a legislative commission created in 1946 and led by Owen D. Young, a former chairman of the General Electric Company and member of the New York Board of Regents. The Young Commission discovered that the majority of high school graduates in New York—the majority, even, of those who placed in the top fourth of their classes—were not going to college due to high tuition costs, limited classroom space and discrimination in the state's existing colleges.

Figure 2

NATIONAL COMPARISON OF SELECTED SAT SCORES

Combined Mathematics and Verbal Scores for Freshmen

Institution	Combined SAT
Columbia University	1,280
Cornell University	1,239
University of Virginia	1,192
Vassar College	1,189
Hamilton College	1,181
Union College	1,180
University of California—Berkeley	1,124
SUNY/Binghamton	**1,123**
SUNY/Albany	**1,108**
Bard College	1,100
University of Florida — Gainesville	1,089
SUNY/Buffalo (Center)	**1,088**
SUNY/Geneseo	**1,082**
SUNY/Maritime College	**1,080**
University of California — Riverside	1,068
SUNY/Purchase	**1,061**
SUNY/Stony Brook	**1,061**
Fordham University	1,058
University of North Carolina — Chapel Hill	1,056

SOURCES: *Comparative Guide to American Colleges*, by James Cass and Max Birnbaum (11th edition, 1983); SUNY data from Office of Educational Services. New York State and National Averages from *College-Bound Seniors, 1982*, Admissions Testing Program of the College Board.

In providing access to higher education, SUNY has succeeded beyond the dreams of its founders. At its inception, the expectation was that SUNY would attract a student body of less than one-third its present size. Today, there is a SUNY campus within 50 miles of almost every state resident. Approximately 95 percent of SUNY's students are residents of New York; the majority receive financial aid while enrolled in one of SUNY's 3,700 academic programs. Nearly half study at one of the 29 institutions that SUNY operates directly.* Others study at SUNY's five statutory colleges, which are operated under various statutes by Cornell and Alfred universities. In addition, 30 community colleges, operated by local governmental units under SUNY's general supervision, guarantee admission to local high school graduates and presently enroll about 48 percent of the student body.

"LOWERED ASPIRATIONS": A HANDICAP FOR SUNY AND NEW YORK STATE

Unlike large public universities in other states, most of which were founded more than 75 years ago, SUNY was originally intended to meet unambitious expectations, and it was founded amidst efforts to constrain its educational role. SUNY is not designated, under the federal Morrill Act, as the land-grant institution of New York state; in 1865, Cornell became one of two private institutions in the U.S. to receive that designation, which it retains today. SUNY was not chartered by constitutional amendment, with responsibilities and status akin to that of a separate branch of state government, as were public universities in California, Michigan, and Minnesota. Instead, it was created by relatively brief amendments to an existing state education law. Unlike major universities elsewhere, SUNY does not have an explicit statement of its mission grounded in law but has had to shape its mission year by year. Instead of being

*These include four graduate university centers, thirteen colleges of arts and science, six agricultural and technical colleges, four specialized colleges, and two additional health sciences centers.

given broad administrative latitude, SUNY has been considered a state agency in its relationships with state government and has thereby been denied the flexibility that universities require.

Since a strong independent educational sector was already in place when SUNY was created, it was said repeatedly during SUNY's early years, in a phrase that nearly had the force of legislation, that SUNY's function was to "supplement but not supplant" the efforts of the state's independent colleges and universities.

One reason for the diminished expectations at SUNY's founding is that in 1948, as today, private universities and colleges played a greater role in New York state than in other states. Today, roughly 44 percent of New York's post-secondary students enroll in private institutions, compared with 22 percent nationally. And in some instances, such as the agricultural extension service operated by Cornell (as the land-grant institution), New York's private institutions were in 1948 already performing service functions that are provided elsewhere by public universities.

Perhaps the lesser expectations for SUNY were understandable in the New York of 1948. However, no other state university system suffers from such crippling ambiguity concerning its place and mission. Today, with the benefit of 36 years of hindsight, it is clear to this Commission that by founding SUNY with lower aspirations than are typical for state-supported higher education, New York:

- underestimated the demand for public higher education within the state; and
- deprived the state's economy of substantial benefits that other states realize from their public universities.

Powerful universities in both the public and independent sectors coexist—and compete—throughout the nation. In California, for example, the private Stanford University has achieved national preeminence in the past several decades, even though Stanford is an hour's drive away from the nationally recognized Berkeley campus of the public University of California. In Illinois, the strength of the public University of Illinois developed in tandem with the private University of Chicago.

It is clear that the independent sector in New York has grown along with SUNY. Between 1973 and 1983, SUNY's enrollment grew by 23.9 percent to the record level of

380,000. Enrollment in the independent sector grew by 23.1 percent to 408,000. The creation of SUNY, along with CUNY and the independent sector, has meant a greater availability and variety of educational systems within New York. This diversity is especially appropriate because there is great demand for higher education in the state: New Yorkers enroll in higher education at rates substantially above the national average.

SUNY TODAY: THE UNFULFILLED PROMISE

All of the following comparisons are disturbing. The evidence is clear and compelling that SUNY's graduate and research programs lag in critical ways. The point is not that SUNY is failing to improve; rather, it is that in the tough competition for research funds, and for exceptional faculty talent, other major public universities, such as California, Texas and Minnesota, are advancing more rapidly, and thus enlarging the "quality gap."

—William Friday,
president, University of
North Carolina

Research and Graduate Education

SUNY's chief academic weaknesses are in research, and graduate and professional education—areas that increasingly hold the key to career success for SUNY students and that are vital to New York's future economic development. Current population trends, which indicate an end to enrollment growth in the coming decade, provide SUNY with the opportunity to focus on improvements in quality, rather than quantity.

Academic Standing. One measure of academic quality is peer-ranking, the assessment of faculty and program quality by the national community of scholars. A number of

nationwide surveys have ranked the quality of the nation's graduate offerings and faculty. Although there are some exceptional graduate and research programs within SUNY, no survey has placed any SUNY graduate campus, as a whole, in the nation's first rank, or the second.

Probably the most comprehensive peer evaluation of U.S. graduate education is a national faculty survey prepared by the Conference Board of Associated Research Councils in 1982. This study considered the "faculty quality" of Ph.D. programs. Only 7 out of 81 SUNY programs were judged to be among the nation's top 20 percent. Of 81 SUNY graduate programs rated in the survey, more than half, or a total of 43, scored below the nationwide average in faculty quality and "effectiveness." *

Libraries. Library holdings, staff, and expenditures are a crude but commonly used measure of scholarly resources. A recent comparison by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) put the library at SUNY-Buffalo in the top third nationally. Relegated to the bottom quarter were the libraries at Stony Brook and Albany. SUNY libraries benefit from interconnection with each other, as do university libraries elsewhere. Still, the Berkeley and Los Angeles campuses of California rank respectively second and third of the ARL's 101 institutions; the University of California at Davis (number 25) also surpasses Buffalo (31). Among the dozens of institutions ranked above SUNY's other university centers: Louisiana State, Arizona State, Southern Illinois University, and the University of Kentucky.

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*In another nationwide faculty survey, conducted in 1977 by researchers Everett Ladd, Jr., and Seymour Lipset, no SUNY state-operated campus made the roster of departments judged by at least 10 percent of respondents to be in the nation's "top five." In contrast, 24 departments at the University of California made the list, as did 17 at Michigan, 12 at Wisconsin, and 6 at the University of Illinois.

Both these studies considered SUNY's statutory colleges at Cornell as part of Cornell, not part of SUNY. This is common in nationwide studies, because Cornell began to operate these units many decades before SUNY was created. If one includes the statutory colleges in rankings of SUNY, then the number of SUNY Ph.D. programs ranked in the top 20 percent in 1982 would increase to 11 out of 86. Two of the statutory colleges were listed in the 1977 survey.

Research Funding. In 1982, the most recent year for which comparative data are available, federal research and development funding received by all four of SUNY's university centers combined totalled $52.7 million, about 64 percent of the amount received, say, by the much older University of Wisconsin at Madison.

- No SUNY university center received as much federal research support as did 59 other public and private campuses, including, for example, Colorado State University, the University of Utah, and Oregon State University.
- In 29 other states, there was at least one campus receiving more federal research funding than Stony Brook, SUNY's top campus.

In recent years, efforts by SUNY's Research Foundation to stimulate research funding for the university have produced encouraging results. Nationally, the growth of federal research funding has slowed to roughly 4 percent annually since 1981, but SUNY has shown an average annual rate of increase in such aid of 8 percent during the last three years.

Attracting Students. Many leading public universities attract large numbers of out-of-state students, who pay higher tuition than residents. But New York state loses more students to public institutions in other states than it attracts from out of state. For example, the most recently available data show that 21,000 new students from New York chose to attend public colleges outside the state in 1981, while New York public colleges that year attracted only 4,500 new students from elsewhere in the U.S. In contrast, New York's independent colleges almost hold their own in border crossings: in 1981, 30,400 New Yorkers became new students at independent colleges outside the state, while New York's independent colleges attracted 25,700 new students from elsewhere in the U.S. Out-of-state attendance at all of New York's public colleges is only one-fourth the national average. The overall result is that, in any given year, New York is a net exporter of some 64,000 students—a number equal to the total enrollment at 13 SUNY campuses.

Figure 3

1982 FEDERAL OBLIGATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT TO THE 100 UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES RECEIVING THE LARGEST AMOUNTS

(DOLLARS IN MILLIONS)

RANK	INSTITUTION	TOTAL	RANK	INSTITUTION	TOTAL
	Total, All Institutions	**4,552.5**	51	University of Miami	27.0
1	Johns Hopkins University	312.9	52	University of Virginia	25.6
2	Mass Inst of Technology	148.8	53	Carnegie-Mellon Univ	25.4
3	Stanford University	124.2	54	University of Connecticut	24.9
4	University of Washington	97.6	55	University of New Mexico	24.7
5	Univ of Cal San Diego	90.8	56	U Tex Hlth Sci Ctr Dallas	23.9
6	Univ of Cal Los Angeles	89.6	57	Princeton University	23.6
7	Columbia Univ Main Div	88.8	58	Colorado State University	22.6
8	Harvard University	85.7	59	Univ of MD Balt Prof Sch	22.3
9	Cornell University	83.9	**60**	**SUNY at Stony Brook**	**22.2**
10	Univ of Wis-Madison	82.4	61	Louisiana State Univ	22.1
11	University of Michigan	79.7	62	Univ of Cal Irvine	22.0
12	Yale University	78.9	63	New Mexico State Univ	21.0
13	University of Minnesota	78.7	64	Rockefeller University	20.8
14	Univ of Pennsylvania	76.9	65	University of Cincinnati	20.1
15	Univ of Cal San Francisco	66.7	66	Univ of Hawaii-Manoa	20.0
16	Univ of Cal Berkeley	65.5	67	CUNY Mt Sinai Sch of Med	19.4
17	Univ of Ill Urbana	63.9	68	VA Polytech Inst & St U	18.6
18	University of Chicago	54.1	69	Emory University	18.5
19	Washington University	52.8	70	U Tennessee Knoxville	18.2
20	Pennsylvania State Univ	50.8	71	NC State Univ at Raleigh	18.1
21	Univ of Southern Cal	50.4	72	Univ of Mass at Amherst	18.0
22	Duke University	50.3	73	Brown University	18.0
23	University of Rochester	46.4	74	Rutgers the St Univ of NJ	17.4
24	Univ of Texas at Austin	44.7	75	University of Dayton	17.0
25	Yeshiva University	44.2	76	University of Georgia	16.9
26	University of Colorado	43.7	77	Tufts University	16.8
27	New York University	43.6	78	Virginia Commonwlth Univ	16.4
28	Georgia Institute of Tech	43.5	79	George Washington Univ	16.2
29	Univ of NC at Chapel Hill	41.8	**80**	**SUNY at Buffalo**	**16.1**
30	Ohio State University	41.0	81	Utah State University	16.0
31	University of Utah	39.8	82	University of Kansas	15.4
32	University of Pittsburgh	39.3	83	U Texas System Cancer Ctr	15.3
33	Purdue University	38.1	84	Washington State Univ	15.2
34	Baylor Col of Medicine	36.9	85	Univ of Missouri Columbia	15.1
35	University of Iowa	36.9	86	Temple University	14.8
36	California Inst of Tech	36.6	87	University of Kentucky	14.7
37	University of Arizona	35.6	88	U Tex Hlth Sci Ctr S Anto	14.4
38	Michigan State University	35.6	89	Univ of Rhode Island	13.9
39	University of Florida	35.1	90	U Tex Hlth Sci Ctr Houstn	13.8
40	Case Western Reserve Univ	34.8	91	Florida State University	13.4
41	Oregon State University	33.2	92	Univ of Cal Santa Barbara	13.3
42	Texas A&M University	33.1	93	Univ of VT & St Agric Col	13.0
43	Northwestern University	33.1	94	Rensselaer Polytech Inst	12.4
44	Woods Hole Ocngrphic Inst	32.8	95	Wayne State University	12.2
45	Univ of Cal Davis	32.7	96	Georgetown University	12.2
46	Boston University	30.3	97	Univ of Ill Med Ctr Chgo	12.0
47	Indiana University	30.0	98	Brandeis University	11.5
48	Vanderbilt University	28.7	99	Univ of Nebraska-Lincoln	11.4
49	Univ Alabama Birmingham	28.7	100	Col of Med & Dent of NJ	10.9
50	Univ of MD College Park	28.3		**Total 1st 100 Institutions**	**3,891.7**

SOURCE: National Science Foundation.

Minority Enrollment. One special dimension is the need to increase the accessibility and utilization of SUNY by members of minority groups. Minority enrollment at SUNY's state-operated campuses is presently about 10 percent. There is some controversy about the proper interpretation of this figure. When comparison is made with the statewide population's minority percentage of 25 percent, SUNY's percentage appears woefully inadequate. When comparison is made with the 9.4 percent minority population *outside New York City* (the city is served primarily by CUNY campuses rather than by SUNY), SUNY's minority enrollment appears to be more representative.

The Commission believes that far more is at stake in improving minority utilization of SUNY than the numeric question of the representativity of SUNY's total minority enrollment. Blacks and Hispanics constitute the fastest growing segment of the state's population. As the New York State Board of Regents has observed, members of minority groups presently enroll in higher education in proportion to their numbers in the state's high school graduating classes. But retention through graduation is lower for minority students. Lower too is the rate of minority enrollment in graduate and professional education. And further, at both graduate and undergraduate levels, minorities (and also women) are much less likely to select scientific and technical courses of study. Strong efforts are required by SUNY to reverse these trends, which presently amount to a loss in "human capital" for the society as a whole. Along with such efforts, SUNY must more intensely recruit minority students at the high school level in New York City and throughout the state, as well as nationally.

A CAUTION FOR THE STATE OF NEW YORK

This Commission believes that New York state has already suffered from its historic delay in beginning to build and maintain a statewide public university system. With regard to the future, the Commission offers a warning: New York state

cannot afford the future costs of failing to develop a top-ranked public university system. Specifically:

- New York state cannot afford to continue exporting so many students to schools and subsequent careers in other states. Instead, New York's public university should be a magnet for top students nationwide.
- New York state can no longer ignore the attraction to industry of quality research and professional centers elsewhere in public higher education. Instead, the faculty and the research achievement of New York's public universities should be magnets for industries in many fields.
- New York state cannot afford to assume that the high skill level of the state's labor force, long one of the state's chief assets, is a resource that will perpetuate itself. Instead, New York must lead in constantly upgrading the skills of its citizens, as is required by the knowledge-based society in which we live.

The record does not show a commitment by New York state to building a leading public university system of high quality as a primary duty of government. No such clear commitment is included in the founding legislation, which makes reference merely to the creation of "a university." This Commission has been unable to detect so basic and essential a commitment in present practice or results.

Instead, among some officials in administrative agencies who exercise controls over SUNY's budget, personnel, purchasing, and auditing, we encountered the view that, for the purposes of these controls, SUNY is "just another agency." We detected considerable pride in SUNY and general satisfaction with its performance, but little understanding of how unusual are the constraints under which SUNY operates, or of SUNY's potential for much greater quality and service to the state.

These are critical issues for New York's future, not empty generalities. The impact of education is not limited to the students. As a number of studies have shown, advancing levels of education are a key cause of productivity increases throughout the economy and a key contributor to the growth of national income.

To achieve its full potential, SUNY must compete every year—for students, faculty, research support, and philanthropic contributions—with other colleges and universities, both in and out of New York. Treating SUNY as just another state agency ignores this competitive aspect of higher education, and the management flexibility that it requires. Traditional state agencies are not engaged in anything comparable to the competition among educational institutions.

—Victor Marrero,
senior partner,
Tufo and Zuccotti

In September 1984, the Business Council of New York State, a private association of businesses and chambers of commerce, released a study of emigration from the state, which found that the state was experiencing a "brain drain." As Walter Fallon, chairman of the Council's Public Policy Institute and a former chairman of the Eastman Kodak Company, said when the study was released: "The state cannot go on losing its trained work force, the life blood of its economy, to the rest of the nation."

More than one-quarter of New York's net population loss (650,000 people) between 1975 and 1980 consisted of adults aged 20 to 34, according to the study. More than 30 percent of those New York lost had attended college, and more than one-sixth were in managerial or professional occupations. The states benefiting most from New York's losses were Florida, New Jersey, and California.

An instructive example of alternative possibilities is provided by North Carolina's "research triangle," a 6,300-acre industrial development area, which has attracted $1.5 billion of capital investment from nationally recognized corporations and the federal government since it began in 1959. The Research Triangle Foundation, owned jointly by Duke

University, the University of North Carolina, and North Carolina State University, has created a partnership among business, state and local government, and both public and private universities. Developed in just 25 years, the research and other facilities today employ 23,000 people in a three-county area that has been credited with transforming the economic and cultural life of North Carolina.

SUNY presently has a number of programs that seek to enhance economic development, primarily of small and medium-size businesses. The community colleges cooperate closely with local governments and industry in providing vocational programs that are attuned to local needs. Technical assistance centers provide guidance on exporting and lending programs. SUNY courses are offered to employees on a contract basis (173 companies and more than 5,000 employees participated in this program in 1983). There are 32 business development centers that provide management consulting to small and start-up companies. In addition, the federal Small Business Administration selected SUNY last year to develop an upstate network of small business development centers.

These efforts are commendable initial steps. But for SUNY to make the major and highly visible contribution to the state's economy that it is capable of making will require selective and well-planned enhancement of the university's academic quality. It will require specific attention to graduate and postgraduate research programs, especially in the sciences and engineering, but also in economics, business, the professions, and the broader array of graduate offerings, including the humanities. The efforts needed include recruitment of outstanding faculty members (who can themselves attract other faculty members and top students), enhanced nationwide student recruiting efforts, and the improvement and modernization of facilities.

More than economic growth is at stake in continuing to fulfill SUNY's promise. The state's commitment to providing access to higher education includes the commitment that the education provided should be one of quality. In the interests of fairness, as well as in the economic interest of New York and its people, it is unacceptable to view the public educational institution that serves 38 percent of New York's students as a "supplemental" or "second best" system. As

Murray Finley, president of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, observes: "SUNY is probably the greatest door of opportunity for children of the members of my union—and for other children—in New York state." SUNY's aim must be nothing less than excellence in education, research, and public service, for the sake of New York's citizens, as well as the overall well-being of New York state.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING SUNY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE STATE

1. To encourage broader understanding throughout New York state of SUNY's mission, the legislation under which SUNY operates should be amended to include a description of SUNY's purpose comparable in nature and scope to the official mission statements provided for other leading public universities. What is urgently needed is understanding and commitment on the part of SUNY's many publics, including the leadership of New York state. Without a fresh and vigorous commitment, SUNY will surely lose ground in the intense national competition for research dollars and faculty talent.

2. Although SUNY's comprehensive colleges compare favorably with regional colleges in other states, the Commission believes that SUNY should expand and broaden efforts to increase cooperation among the colleges, and between the colleges and other SUNY institutions, in areas such as the development of joint programs and the sharing of resources and facilities.

3. SUNY should strengthen the functions of research, and graduate and professional education. Appropriate mechanisms for this effort include:

- internal reviews at the campus level of departmental statements of mission and developmental plans; and
- increased solicitation of the views of outside scholars and other specialists to aid departmental reviews and identification of developmental priorities.

4. The university centers at Buffalo and Stony Brook have demonstrated leadership in research and graduate offerings. Buffalo was founded as a private university in 1846. It owes much of its strength to its long history, and it is located in a region of the state that is among those most sensitive to economic development issues. Stony Brook is the product of a major state and SUNY commitment. It is located on Long Island, a densely populated region that depends on advanced skills in the labor force. These campuses should be developed much more energetically as resources for the system as a whole.

The centers at Albany and Binghamton have demonstrated strength in a number of important fields and should build on their more selective strength as graduate and research centers.

There should be continuing enhancement of SUNY's other specialized graduate and research offerings elsewhere, so long as these meet the tests of need and quality.

5. While responding to the need to enhance quality throughout the system, ways must be found to make possible greater *differential* levels of faculty and administrative salaries, and *differential* levels of support for research facilities and libraries, rather than applying uniform scales and schedules throughout the system.

6. Groupings of comparable institutions in other states should be prepared to provide a comparative yardstick for budgetary purposes, provided that the institutions chosen for comparison with SUNY are those at or near the top in nationally recognized rankings of academic quality among the various kinds of institutions.

7. Society's increased dependence upon advances in research has led universities nationwide to seek new kinds of partnership with industry. Under appropriate academic guidelines, SUNY should develop additional opportunities for joint research consortia involving cooperation between SUNY and other universities and private industry.

8. SUNY's efforts to recruit minorities through outreach programs at the high school level and in the state's urban areas should be intensified.

9. An increase in minority enrollment in graduate and professional study is a high priority requirement. This entails the goal, which SUNY is presently pursuing, of increasing retention rates among minority undergraduates. Appropriate mechanisms for achieving these ends include counseling programs and dissemination of materials describing educational opportunities.

OVER-REGULATION: SUNY'S NEED FOR A NEW STRUCTURE

As a citizen, and as a businessman, I am appalled at the way the present system denies SUNY's board of trustees the powers trustees should have. No other university in the country runs this way, and no business that I know of could run this way and survive. We need a drastic change in the way SUNY is governed so the university can meet the future needs of our state.

—Ralph Davidson,
chairman, Time Inc.

During the year in which this Commission has been in existence, one topic has repeatedly produced disbelief, shock, and dismay among the commissioners, including the four commissioners with personal experience directing institutions of public higher education in other states. These feelings have arisen as the Commission has come to understand the way the government of New York state has unintentionally but systematically prevented those who are supposed to manage SUNY from actually exercising responsibility for SUNY. The state has entrusted its university with the education of a generation of New Yorkers, but the state government does not seem to trust SUNY's board of trustees, chancellor, or campus presidents with even the most elementary administrative decisions concerning the institutions they have been asked to manage.

Unanimously, the commissioners believe that no great university, and no very good one, has been built or can be built under the state rules that presently govern the administration of SUNY. In the Commission's view, there is a clear choice before New York: the state can decide that New York is not going to get a public university of high quality. Or it can change the rules.

If SUNY is not granted the management flexibility and authority that is necessary for the successful operation of a university system, we do not believe that SUNY is capable of implementing the recommendations contained in other sections of this report in a satisfactory manner, despite the talent and dedication of those within SUNY; nor do we believe that New York state will receive the benefits that it so urgently requires from its state university system.

We believe that members of the legislative and executive branches, whose support is required to change the rules, care deeply about SUNY and the future of New York state. We wish to make clear that none of those now in office personally created the present system, and many have in fact sought solutions to these problems. All state officials with whom we have visited have urged this Commission to publish our conclusions without regard to their political dimension. This Commission appreciates the serious nonpartisan concern for SUNY's future that has been conveyed to us by leaders in the executive and legislative branches of government.

It is our hope that the following review of SUNY's

present governance and structure will not be considered as a criticism of any official or group of officials. They have had little choice under the laws of New York state, given the existing structure of SUNY. What we criticize is a tradition of over-regulation that has its roots in the legal conception of SUNY as state agency, a tradition that dates from 1948 but which, the Commission is convinced, SUNY has now outgrown.

To those who may doubt the seriousness of the problem of over-regulation, as did the commissioners themselves at first, we can only repeat: it is our considered judgment that SUNY stands no chance to become what it can be unless the executive and legislative branches of government join with SUNY to effect a thorough and complete change in SUNY's status within government, and in the manner in which governmental oversight of SUNY is exercised.

STATE AGENCIES AND UNIVERSITIES

Although technically a corporate body, SUNY has evolved as an agency of state government, much like, say, the Department of Transportation or the Department of Correctional Services. This arrangement is administered by dedicated public servants both inside SUNY and in other branches of state government. Nevertheless, the treatment of SUNY as a state agency within one of the nation's largest state governments has produced an unintended result, namely, destroying the very accountability for public higher education that New York state sought when it created SUNY, and to which it is entitled.

The agency structure within state government can be an appropriate and effective form. State agencies such as the Department of Motor Vehicles provide highly important services that are essential to the health and well-being of the state, including protecting the citizens' property, and even their very lives, on the state's highways. In understanding the administrative dilemma posed by SUNY, the Commission does not believe, and is not suggesting, that it is profitable or necessary to engage in debate about the relative importance of higher education and other public purposes.

What the Commission does insist upon seems clear: colleges and universities are *different* in their very nature from traditional state agencies. The creation of a body of trustees to govern SUNY, in contrast to the individual commissioners who govern virtually all other state agencies, is an official gesture recognizing that a university does not fit the traditional pattern of a state agency.

Unlike typical divisions of state government, higher educational institutions are bound by traditions of decentralized faculty governance, professional peer review, and multistate accreditation. In their basic and essential tasks, colleges and universities do not serve the public by applying statewide procedures from classroom to classroom, or from campus to campus. Their success depends upon a commitment to individual scholarship, independent teaching, and academic research in a wide array of fields, most of them well beyond the expertise of the local division chief (that is, the campus president). Unlike the regional office of a typical state agency, or of a typical private firm, the campus of a college or university is not a hierarchical institution under the direction of a local manager, but a complex collegial body built around individual talents. It is difficult enough to manage from across the hall, let alone from across the state.

Yet, the definition of SUNY as a state agency has left the government of New York with no alternative but to attempt to deal with the university by means of administrative mechanisms that are tragically inappropriate because they have been designed to fit governmental units that can and must be administered uniformly and directly by state government. Recent efforts by state leaders to address this problem have been welcome initial steps, but they have dealt merely with the tip of a massive, underlying problem.

EXAMPLES OF THE PROBLEM

Over-regulation pervades every aspect of SUNY's operation, in ways both large and small. Consider the following examples, chosen almost at random from among thousands of similar cases in the files of SUNY's 64 campuses, and repeated here merely as background to the discussion that follows.

Medical Misunderstanding

After locating a kidney donor, the Upstate Medical Center proposed to undertake a kidney transplant several years ago. At SUNY, even budgeted purchases must be individually approved—in advance—by the state's comptroller and Office of General Services, a process termed "pre-audit." (Traditional audits also take place in the state system; they are known as "post-audits.") The medical center submitted a pre-audit form indicating a cost of approximately $5,000 for operating on the kidney donor. But an official in the state's Department of Audit and Control refused to authorize the medical procedure. The reason: there had been no competitive bidding to set a fair market price for the kidney that the state proposed to acquire. Fortunately, a telephone call to another official cleared up this misunderstanding; nevertheless, the episode illustrates the administrative *minutiae* with which SUNY must contend.

Computers Come To Stony Brook

New interest in computers led to high enrollment in the computer science department at SUNY-Stony Brook in the autumn of 1981. Enrollment in the introductory course (a required prerequisite for more advanced courses) was unusually strong. But, due to a shortage of computer terminals, many students had to wait in line for as long as two hours to complete their coursework; when the term was over, roughly half of the 400 students took incompletes or failed.

Anxious to prevent a recurrence of that disaster in the following autumn, the department sought, throughout the winter, to purchase 30 additional computer terminals. In addition, an emergency schedule was devised that included keeping the computer center open until 2 a.m. (later changed to 4 a.m.) and adding a summer session of the introductory course. Unfortunately, when the next school year began, the urgently-needed terminals, whose delivery had seemed a reasonable expectation six months earlier, remained tied up in the state's purchasing bureaucracy, where they were subject to review by the central administration of SUNY, then by the Division of the Budget (DOB), and then by the Office of

General Services. The result: an even worse crisis in the fall of 1982. During that term, two-thirds of the students who signed up for the introductory computer course either failed, withdrew, or requested incompletes. The terminals finally arrived—in the spring of 1983.

For Want of a Roof...

Requests for a new roof over the student center at SUNY's Agricultural and Technical College at Alfred, N.Y., went unheeded for so long that, by 1975, janitors had to hang sheets of plastic from the ceiling to prevent rain water from dousing athletic events in the gymnasium below. A bid for roof repairs, totaling $152,000, was approved by the Division of the Budget in 1976. But, by then, the neglected leaks had caused other damage. So in 1979, the gymnasium floor was replaced—at a cost of $53,000. A year later, the ceiling in the auditorium and swimming pool areas was also replaced—at a cost of $33,000. In sum, the initial failure to approve roof replacement increased the total repair bill by $86,000.

Going Places

Throughout academia, faculty members rely on professional meetings to broaden their knowledge and to recruit faculty members and graduate students. During 1982 and 1983, strict limits on expense reimbursements for out-of-state travel were imposed on all state employees. The deputy director of the budget personally reviewed requests from each faculty member who sought to attend a conference out of state.

To no avail, SUNY argued that the best way to reduce travel expenses would be to cut campus travel budgets, allowing local administrations to judge among claims. During the two-year ban, different decisions were sometimes rendered to faculty members from different campuses concerning the same professional conference. In one case, two individuals from the same campus sought permission to attend the same professional meeting: one request was approved, the other was rejected. When the discrepancy was questioned, *both* requests were denied.

To Recruit, or Not To Recruit

Between February and June, universities do most of their hiring for the coming academic year. But in February 1983, New York state was in the grip of a budgetary crisis, resulting from a revenue shortfall. SUNY was ordered to cut more than 1,000 faculty and staff positions and to freeze hiring.

SUNY developed a financial plan that would save most of the positions; officials at SUNY-Central pleaded to postpone sending termination notices until that plan could be considered. But permission was denied on the grounds that SUNY could not be treated differently from other agencies. Termination notices were actually sent to nearly 200 faculty and staff.

In March, SUNY's financial plan for saving the positions was approved. Faculty and staff who had learned, a month earlier, that they were singled out for termination, now received notices rescinding their termination. Many no doubt used the reprieve to search for new jobs elsewhere.

That spring, some campuses took no steps to fill vacancies in various academic fields, in accordance with the hiring freeze. Others made tentative offers. Observing that a campus could not re-assign, say, a specialist in Victorian literature to teach electrical engineering, SUNY-Central sought to modify the freeze, and finally succeeded in July 1983—too late to prevent the disruption of summer school staffing. When the new term began in the fall, campuses that had made informal commitments to faculty and graduate assistants—in technical violation of the freeze—fared much better than did those that had diligently complied.

Certainly, SUNY must accept its fair share of the burden in state fiscal emergencies like those of 1983. But, in this case, as in the case of statewide travel bans, it would have been far less disruptive had SUNY been given an overall financial goal to meet and then allowed to implement its own financial plan in pursuit of the required fiscal target.

Self-help On The Campus

Throughout the U.S., both public and private institutions of higher education have lately sought to generate supplemental revenues by developing innovative programs, including noncredit offerings for adults and new uses of the campus. This is in response to a nationwide cost and revenue squeeze that continues throughout higher education. Elsewhere in the U.S., various campuses are renting dormitories during the summer, selling timber, even conducting classes in shopping centers on weekends for working adults. Yet at SUNY, statewide governmental policies actively, if unwittingly, discourage such efforts.

Many SUNY campuses have opportunities to generate income from such activities as selling publications at campus exhibitions, rental of rehearsal and conference space to community groups, and, chiefly, offering noncredit and experimental courses to adults in the community. Not long ago, for example, SUNY-Purchase generated $250,000 from such activities. The campus intended to use a portion of this revenue to offer more part-time evening courses sought by area residents in subjects such as environmental science, the arts, and management. Other portions of this revenue would be used to cover more general campus costs, such as the purchase of cafeteria food.

But in 1983, the Division of the Budget took the position, traditionally applied to revenues produced by state agencies, that such revenues were surplus balances that should be returned to the state. They could not be spent at the discretion of the campus. Under state policies, the revenues from ongoing campus programs, even those that appear to be self-supporting or entrepreneurial, must be included in the statewide budgeting process. They cannot simply remain earmarked for the program or the campus that produced them, even though that is the campus' goal.

Given the lead times, uncertainty, and rigidity of the statewide budgetary process, the upshot throughout SUNY's system has been discouragement of innovation, inertia in responding to community interests, and a weakening of morale among those who seek (like their counterparts elsewhere in higher education) to help their campus solve its own financial problems.

In the Commission's view, there are no flesh-and-blood villains in tales like the one above. In general, we believe that local initiatives undertaken for worthy aims should be expanded and encouraged within SUNY, as they are at campuses elsewhere. But we also respect the mandates of the Division of the Budget and other state agencies to uphold the laws and procedures under which they operate throughout the state. There is a villain in this case, but it is impersonal; the villain is an archaic public policy.

The present statewide process of detailed control over all revenues and expenses thwarts local and laudable educational initiatives. The process is inappropriate for the management of a single campus of higher education, and even more inappropriate for a system of 64 campuses. Unwittingly, if heavy-handedly and inevitably, the process takes the responsibility for campus management away from those appointed to that task. The goal is a worthy one: enforcing public accountability for the expenditure of public funds. But in practice, the process represents a triumph of technique over purpose. It undercuts the accountability that really matters, namely, accountability for the effective delivery of high quality educational services.

> *It's supposed to be an equal partnership with other sectors of education in the state. But it's not. We have to eliminate the hobbles that make it impossible for SUNY to adjust to changing circumstances and discerned educational needs.*
>
> —Malcolm Wilson,
> chairman and chief executive officer,
> Manhattan Savings Bank,
> formerly governor of New York

SUNY'S TRUSTEES: RESPONSIBILITY NOT MATCHED BY AUTHORITY

By law, and in theory, the state legislature put the trustees in charge of SUNY. For example, the law grants them the power to "distribute, expend and administer for SUNY institutions such property and funds as the State may

appropriate therefor." Interpreting the law, judicial opinions, including a State Court of Appeals ruling in 1978, have confirmed that the trustees are responsible. The state legislature, said the court, "vested in the Board of Trustees of the State University the same power to administer the day-to-day operations of the State University as trustees of private institutions of higher education had been granted."

But in practice the power of SUNY's trustees does not come close to that of trustees at other universities, public or private. It is a common assumption, for example, that in any given year, once the governor and the state legislature have determined the extent of funding for SUNY, responsibility for the operation of the university, within its budget, falls to the university itself, under the trustees. In fact, that is not the case. The trustees may bear legal responsibility for SUNY's expenditure of appropriated sums, but, by themselves, they lack power over how the funds will be spent once they are appropriated. And if budgetary cutbacks are required as the year unfolds, the trustees lack power over how and where these will be made as well. Similarly, because they are considered part of a state agency, the trustees of SUNY also lack ultimate power over creation of university positions, salaries, educational programs, equipment purchasing, fellowships, and even the size of their own staff.

This situation is without parallel in the other 49 states. The Commission was shocked to learn how little practical, day-by-day authority can be exercised by the board of trustees, an appointive body thought by the public to possess authority that it lacks in fact. Various provisions of the state Finance Law, the state Education Law, and regulations of the Division of the Budget, all crafted for important public purposes, nevertheless produce a result that is atypical and inappropriate within public higher education, namely, preventing the trustees from exercising final authority over the institution of which they are trustees. And, in a classic double-bind, none of these laws and procedures empower any other group besides the trustees to take the trustees' place. The system often functions adequately on a day-to-day basis, thanks to valiant efforts by those inside SUNY *and* those throughout state government who must cope with the present structure. But at present, it often appears that no one has the ultimate responsibility for SUNY.

At present, for example, once money has been appropriated by the legislature, SUNY, as a state agency, is not allowed to spend it—unless and until the university receives approval of its schedule of personnel positions and salaries, and its planned expenditures for maintenance and other operations, from the Division of the Budget. Nor can SUNY spend money received in tuition receipts, lab fees, or revenues from the sale of tickets to campus theatricals unless and until the same kind of approval is received—in advance, for each particular category—from DOB. To shift a secretarial position at one campus, say, from the dean's office to the admissions office, is beyond the power of the campus president, the chancellor of the university, and the university's board of trustees—unless any or all of these officials have first received the approval of DOB, a process that typically requires 30 days and numerous pieces of paper. Other regulations apply to a benumbing number of items: hiring above the minimum salary, adding staff, making promotions, printing course listings, planning for graduate fellowships, defining geographic pay differentials, etc.

W. Clarke Wescoe, chairman of Sterling Drug Inc. and former chancellor of the University of Kansas, offered the following reaction after learning of the detailed control exercised over all aspects of the management of SUNY: "New York state runs its university like it runs its prisons." It may be painful for New Yorkers to acknowledge it, but, with only limited exceptions, that statement is literally true.

> *The message...is that the State does not trust a local institution to manage its daily life. The irony is that faculty and administrators respond by investing an inordinate amount of time and energy 'getting around' state regulations and practices. Their frustration—and the cynicism that inevitably accompanies it—rubs off on students. An environment dominated by distrust and cynicism is not one in which learning flourishes.*
>
> —Final Report of the Study Group on Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education, a nationwide review sponsored by the National Institute of Education

THE COSTS OF OVER-REGULATION

Faculty Raids

One of the fundamental ways in which the regulatory climate affects SUNY is the university's inability, except on rare occasions under extraordinary circumstances, to frame matching offers quickly and flexibly to keep valued faculty members—including those who are recipients of substantial federal research contracts. Recently, the campus at Stony Brook and SUNY's central administration began an extraordinary round of consultations with the Division of the Budget. The aim of this trilateral consultation was finding funds for research equipment that was needed to retain the services of one Stony Brook faculty member who was tempted by offers of access to modern equipment from three other institutions. In that negotiation, a shift of funds was arranged. But at about the same time, Stony Brook lost the chairman of its department of microbiology and three other faculty members, along with their research grants, experiments, technicians, and, it is likely, many of their graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. Given the opportunity to work in better facilities without regulatory restraints, and at higher salaries, the chairman and two of the faculty left for an independent university (from which two of them had come to Stony Brook two years earlier).

The predictable result is that SUNY is weakened in the competition for faculty talent. In general, all of SUNY's university centers are exposed to an unusually high risk of academic "raids," because deans and campus presidents have strict limits placed on their negotiating flexibility. It can take 10 or 15 years to build a top department; faculty departures can undo much of the achievement in a single year. It is not reasonable, workable, or in the interest of SUNY and New York state to require a trilateral negotiation throughout a statewide system every time a valued faculty member receives a competitive offer.

Waste

Administrators throughout SUNY report that some state procedures cause direct waste of budgeted funds. For example, slow payment by state government results in loss of

available discounts for prompt payment. A study at SUNY-Binghamton, which had contracted with a separate, not-for-profit corporation chartered to operate the campus bookstore and vending services, found that the local cost of processing payment vouchers was approximately 40 percent less per voucher than the costs entailed in the statewide payment system. A current systemwide experiment in purchasing flexibility, inaugurated in 1984, became ensnarled in a blizzard of "flexibility" program paperwork. Nevertheless, preliminary results suggest that local campus purchasing has resulted in a 9 percent saving compared with statewide purchasing practices.

Such direct waste is serious, but even more significant, in our view, is the diversion of time and energy that is required throughout the SUNY system by the task of responding to state agency paperwork and procedures, very little of which is relevant to the way most universities conduct their business. We have no doubt that the manpower cost of meeting state procedures atypical in university management runs into the tens of millions of dollars annually. Less quantifiable, but more critical, is the diversion of energy from the task of providing educational leadership.

Inability To Downsize

On the campuses, the conviction is widespread that the fate of SUNY institutions depends on decisions by distant officials who are not charged with educational responsibility. This has produced an atmosphere of mistrust that complicates attempts by SUNY-Central to encourage trimming of unnecessary programs. For example, SUNY's chancellor reported to local campuses in 1981 that the director of the budget had agreed to an incentive program for campuses that decided to trim or eliminate programs: the campuses would be allowed to keep half of the resources thereby saved and reallocate them for the enrichment of other programs. The first test of this policy was the closing of several campus-based schools for faculty and community children, a measure agreed to with reluctance by some SUNY campuses after prolonged and painful discussion. In 1982-83, SUNY requested that 40 of the 78 positions that had been allocated to campus schools be retained for other purposes. But the executive budget recommended retention of only 22

of those positions, later changed to 39. Then, in 1983-84, *all* of those campus positions were eliminated, thus confirming the worst fears of SUNY campuses and effectively eliminating any trace of the carefully wrought incentive for selective program reductions. This and other examples suggest persuasively that the present system is not fit for the tasks of downsizing and program refocusing within SUNY that will be required in the coming decade.

COMPARISON WITH OTHER STATES: LEVELS OF DECISION-MAKING

Practices in other states provide compelling evidence that the policies by which SUNY is regulated are neither common nor necessary in the management of public higher education. A comparison of finance, personnel, and curricular policies among large public systems in ten states, prepared for this Commission, found that SUNY had less management flexibility than public universities have in any other comparable state. Numerical scores were prepared to permit approximate comparison among states that follow policies that differ in many details. New York's score on "program flexibility" did rank just above the middle. But New York appeared at the bottom of the scales for flexibility in finance and flexibility in staffing decisions. Overall, New York's system was the least flexible of those ranked. The states that ranked highest in management flexibility were Michigan, Ohio, Missouri, California, and, tied for fifth place, Wisconsin and Texas. It is not a coincidence that states ranked high in management flexibility are also states whose universities are recognized as national educational leaders.

The ranking tables developed by the study provide only a rough guide. More revealing are the study's specific comparisons of different management procedures. The respected systems in California, Wisconsin, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Michigan are not subjected to pre-auditing of educational expenditures (although the systems do receive traditional periodic financial audits). Again, each of these states (and most others as well) allow campuses to shift allocated funds within various budget categories, an

Figure 4

FLEXIBILITY IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION IN NEW YORK AND TEN COMPARABLE STATES

ISSUES	STATES										
	NY	IL	MI	CA	NJ	PA	WI	MO	TX	OH	FL
FISCAL FLEXIBILITY											
State operating budget allocation by positions and dollars categorized by object of expenditure and/or by function:											
a. Positions and dollars by object *and* function	X										
b. Positions and dollars by object *or* function							X				X
c. Only dollars by object *or* function		X	X	X	X	X			X		
d. Lump sum (no categorization)								X		X	
Campus expenditure flexibility after state allocation:											
a. Little	X	X									
b. Great (within function or within object)				X	X	X			X		X
c. Complete			X				X	X		X	
Pre-audit of expenditure:											
a. Elaborate (two or more state agencies)	X								X		
b. Moderate (one state agency)		X						X			X
c. No pre-audit (post-audit only)			X	X	X	X	X			X	
Control of revenues from research, room and board, fees and other auxiliary services:											
a. Most regarded as state income	X										X
b. Most retained by campus or system		X		X	X						
c. All retained and managed by generating campus			X			X	X	X	X	X	
PERSONNEL FLEXIBILITY											
Extent of state control over ceilings on faculty positions:											
a. High	X			X							X
b. Moderate					X		X				
c. Low		X	X			X		X	X	X	
Extent of state control on out-of-state travel for university employees:											
a. Strict	X										
b. Moderate										X	
c. Almost none		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
PROGRAMMATIC FLEXIBILITY											
Highest authority significantly involved in reviewing and eliminating existing undergraduate programs:											
a. State	X				X	X					
b. Multi-campus system		X					X	X			X
c. Campus			X	X					X	X	
Highest authority significantly involved in adding or discontinuing an academic department or division:											
a. State	X				X				X		X
b. Multi-campus system				X		X	X	X			
c. Campus		X	X							X	

SOURCES: Fred Volkwein, "State Financial Control Practices and Public Universities: Results of a National Study." Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Chicago, Illinois, March 1984. (Fiscal and Personnel Information).
The Control of the Campus: A Report on the Governance of Higher Education. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Washington, D.C., 1982. (Programmatic Information).

elementary management requirement denied to SUNY. Further, Ohio, Missouri, Wisconsin, and Michigan, among others, provide "complete" flexibility to shift allocated funds *between* categories. The study also found that none of the other systems must prepare an operating budget with as much detail as is required in New York.

THE NATIONAL TREND TOWARD DEREGULATION IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

Great universities are not made by governments. They are made by learned men and women who are free to think and dream, and by bright students who are free to learn. Government's first obligation is to trust that freedom, and its second is to help nourish it.

—The Rev. Timothy Healy, S.J.,
president, Georgetown University

Many states have changed their governing arrangements for public higher education since 1980. Enrollment declines, and the conviction that states must work harder to avoid unnecessary duplication of programs, have inspired these efforts. In the process, a number of states—which already had greater management flexibility than New York—chose to grant still more management flexibility to campuses and to educational governing boards. Florida, Pennsylvania, and Colorado are among such states.

For example, the state of Colorado abandoned its policy of making appropriations to each institution by a multiplicity of line items in 1981. Instead, the state substituted lump-sum appropriations per campus, with final control over each institution's share of the pie resting with the governing boards that oversee various kinds of institutions in the state. Colorado's deregulation gave the governing boards flexibility to shift funds *among* institutions, to set tuition (within broad limits), and, significantly, to retain, expand, and carry forward into subsequent years cash surpluses generated by the institutions.

In the past year, selective, individual changes in procedure have been supported by New York's governor, Division of the Budget, and other state agencies, as well as by the legislature, to provide a measure of increased flexibility for SUNY. Such change reflects welcome concern for SUNY and its future. However, in the judgment of the Commission, this incremental approach is not by any means sufficient.

Some of the efforts to cut red tape have resulted in improvements, but they have also produced additional layers of regulation and paperwork. For the following reasons, we conclude that there are severe drawbacks to solutions that take the form of ad-hoc procedural agreements, even when they can provide some limited relief: 1) agencies that have government-wide mandates and responsibilities are much too restricted—legally and procedurally—in the extent to which they can make an exception for SUNY; 2) ad-hoc procedural agreements take a great deal of time for state officials and SUNY administrators to define and negotiate; 3) such agreements can be undone at the discretion of agencies outside of SUNY (or at some future shift in political winds); and 4) procedural agreements do not address the underlying problem, which is the failure to provide accountability in higher education by placing responsibility for SUNY squarely within the purview of the SUNY board of trustees and educational leadership.

To accomplish this goal, the Commission has concluded that a policy of lump-sum budgeting and appropriations is required for SUNY as a whole, and for the individual state-operated campuses, in accordance with policies of SUNY's board of trustees. Under such a policy, responsibility for the allocation of available resources among SUNY's campuses would rest with SUNY's board of trustees; at the same time, responsibility for the allocation of sums made available to each campus would be the responsibility of the campus, under policies established by the trustees. Such an approach would provide the needed incentives for locally initiated effort of all kinds, including efforts aimed at cost reduction. It could encourage the campuses to generate and retain revenues for valid purposes. Such an approach would also allow the state to benefit from the oversight and statewide perspective of the trustees and SUNY-Central.

For lump-sum appropriation to be effective, the policy must be implemented with traditional, periodic audits of

financial performance, as occurs in other states, but without pre-audits and without the array of extrinsic approvals now required in advance even for routine activities.

How, given the existing New York state laws and procedures, can lump-sum budgeting and the other essential ingredients of management flexibility that universities require be provided to SUNY?

It would be possible, in principle, to grant SUNY the required flexibility by amending a number of different sections of a number of different laws—the state Education Law, the state Finance Law, the state Executive Law, and possibly a great many other statutes. Realistically, we conclude that this approach will not succeed because it is complex and because it requires amendments to laws affecting a great many agencies beyond SUNY. Given the complexity and difficulty of this alternative, we have concluded that the only realistic way to respond to SUNY's need for fundamental and system-wide management flexibility is to make a basic change in SUNY's charter and structure.

This could be accomplished by amendment to the New York state Constitution. Several of the public institutions whose faculty rank at the top of national quality ratings are in fact constitutional agencies. This Commission would support such a solution if it met the other tests listed at the end of this section of the report. However, we believe that the needed changes can be created more expeditiously by another solution.

To provide the required management flexibility to SUNY, we have concluded that SUNY should become a "public benefit corporation," that is, a corporation organized to manage services of public importance. Such forms have in the past been relied upon to provide the management flexibility denied to a state agency. Typically, public benefit corporations submit periodic reports on their activities to governing authorities and undergo periodic government audits, usually on an annual basis. Their major actions, but not their day-to-day management, are subject to review by the governor and the legislature. Their expenditures are subject to periodic audits, usually on an annual basis, by the state comptroller.

In New York, such forms have in the past frequently been called "authorities" and founded to allow the issuing of

bonds and the independent accumulation of debt. That is not the purpose here. The term and form that this Commission recommends is the broader "public benefit corporation," a structure whose specific powers are defined in its charter. The form of a public benefit corporation can provide the required management flexibility for a public institution funded by both governmental and nongovernmental sources. Such a structure can be created without any bond-issuing power or with bond-issuing powers strictly limited by existing state mechanisms.

> *If SUNY is a conventional state agency, then it is probably incorrect to demand that it stand alongside its sister systems in other states. It simply lacks the mechanisms to respond as a truly great university system must.*
>
> —Flora Mancuso Edwards,
> president, Hostos Community College

In calling for the re-structuring of SUNY as a public benefit corporation, the Commission recognizes that time will be required not only to define such a structure, but also to allow the university and its various campuses to prepare for operations within it. The fact that the transition must be well considered does not by any means diminish the Commission's conviction that SUNY is as able as are the nation's other public universities—and other public benefit corporations—to assume the full burden of responsibility and accountability for its activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON MANAGEMENT FLEXIBILITY

1. Legislation should be adopted to restructure SUNY as a public benefit corporation. We are aware that undertakings of this magnitude can easily be neglected by leaders under the pressures of day to day affairs. In the hope of reminding all concerned of the priority this Commission attaches to the need for a fundamental change in SUNY's structure, members of this Commission have expressed their readiness to reconvene as events warrant to review steps taken toward the restructuring of SUNY.

2. As tests to be met by any new structure developed for SUNY, the Commission sets out below four criteria, which are based on the concepts of lump-sum budgeting, the priority of educational goals in the management of SUNY, local variation, and management decentralization.

A. The state share of operating support for SUNY should be provided in a lump sum, by which is meant that the trustees should have discretion as to the allocation of these funds, as well as the discretion to shift funds among budget categories. Upon the recommendation of the chancellor, SUNY's trustees should in turn provide lump-sum funding to the campuses, by which it is meant that each campus should retain the ability to shift funds within a level of total funding and to expend those funds in accordance with the policies of the trustees.

B. The concept of the lump sum should apply as well to any budget cutbacks that may be required from time to time by shortfalls in state revenues. That is, in the case of such shortfalls, the trustees should have discretion to apportion any required cutbacks among budget categories and among campuses, and, within the trustees' apportionment, each campus should have discretion as to which areas to reduce.

C. In accordance with policies established by the trustees, campuses shall have the ability to generate their own supplemental revenues and to generate periodic "surpluses" that can be spent on enrichment and other operations, so that reductions in support are not the inevitable, and deadening, consequence of successful innovation.

D. Following a determination by the chancellor that a proposed new educational program meets the tests of community need and academic quality, SUNY should be able to establish new programs under the authority of the state Board of Regents in the same amount of time, and with the same amount of effort, as other state institutions, including those in the independent sector.

3. The board of trustees of the university must eventually possess, among other powers, the final authority to:

A. develop, submit, and, when appropriated, administer a unitary budget for the State University of New York subject to full compliance with all post-auditing requirements;

B. develop comprehensive long-range plans for the university that will direct basic budget preparation each year;

C. define the educational mission of each institution and then to allocate educational programs and activities among the constituent institutions to avoid costly duplication and to ensure appropriate offerings when demonstrably needed;

D. appoint and establish the compensation of the chancellor and his senior staff, and, upon recommendation of the chancellor, appoint and establish the compensation of all senior administrative officers of constituent institutions;

E. be responsible for the general determination, control, supervision, management, and governance of all affairs of the constituent institutions, and to be able to make such delegations of authority to the institutions as it may deem wise;

F. collect data to aid its review of the state university's performance and educational needs in the state, and to publish such data and analyses.

4. In general, it should be recognized that the education, research, and public service provided by SUNY does not take place from the top down, but from the bottom up. These activities take place in the individual classroom, in the lab, and in the community, due to individual efforts by faculty members, students, and citizens.

Significant benefits often result from viewing the system as a whole, and sound management of scarce public resources requires that resources and needs be balanced throughout the system. Nevertheless, what justifies the entire apparatus of SUNY is what happens in individual classrooms, labs, libraries, and communities. Where choices must be made, the maximum possible deference should be paid, in ascending order of importance, to the individual campus, the single academic department, the individual faculty member, and, where appropriate, the individual student. The primary reason this Commission has called for the creation of a new structure under the SUNY trustees, and greater flexibility for the administrators of SUNY, is that we believe that only by this means will there be continued improvement in SUNY's teaching, research, and community service.

SUNY'S CONFIGURATION: THE UNPLANNED SYSTEM

As chairman of SUNY's board, I am often asked why SUNY has four university centers, a particular campus located in a particular town, and any number of other puzzling characteristics. I inevitably reply by quoting Alfonso X, the Learned, King of the Spanish states of Castile and León in the 13th century. He said: "Had I been present at the Creation, I would have given some useful hints for ordering of the universe." He wasn't, and I wasn't. But I hope that now we can seize the opportunity to be present at a re-creation of SUNY.

—Donald M. Blinken,
chairman,
SUNY's board of trustees

The diversity of campus types within SUNY is unique, reflecting historical circumstances more than deliberate, consistent institutional planning. It is rare to include in the same administrative structure community colleges, four-year colleges, university centers, and health sciences centers. Also unusual is New York's reliance upon five specialized and distinguished "statutory" colleges contracted to independent universities (at Cornell, colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Veterinary Medicine, and Human Ecology, and the School of Industrial and Labor Relations; at Alfred, Ceramics).

Although SUNY began as a diverse amalgam, the Commission believes that the existence of the system represents powerful advantages for New York and SUNY. At least potentially, the system provides an opportunity for SUNY to monitor and reallocate resources based on a statewide assessment of needs and strengths in the public sector. It provides a much-needed opportunity for SUNY to exercise educational leadership, to integrate, to balance, and to make distinctions as required. We reject any effort to dismantle SUNY, and we wish to affirm the potential for SUNY, as a system, to play a vital leadership role.

SHOULD CAMPUSES BE CLOSED?

Since at least the mid-1970s, as planners have predicted striking enrollment declines, there have been persistent concerns over whether SUNY is "overbuilt" or has "excess capacity." The college at Purchase, for example, has classrooms and laboratories for 6,000 students, but enrolls only about half that number. Similarly, the university's rural residential campuses have found it harder to meet enrollment targets than the urban and suburban campuses, which have many commuting and older students.

Several facts suggest that the main issue is less one of total *capacity* than an issue of *distribution* of facilities. For example:

- New York state is a net exporter of college students, as noted earlier. Were SUNY to recover just one-half of the present net loss of New York students to other states'

public universities, the number of additional students could offset even extremely pessimistic forecasts of future decline at the state-operated campuses.

- So far, at least, the predicted enrollment declines have been reassuringly small and well within SUNY's capacity to handle. In part, this is due to increasing participation by older adults and part-time students, as well as an increase in college attendance among women.
- Some individual campuses have seen applications decline, but, for the system as a whole, aggregate demand remains near its historic high point.
- While the pool of New York high school graduates will continue to shrink through the 1980s, demography indicates that during the 1990s, the pool of high school graduates will again begin to grow.

Limited gains could result from closing a small number of SUNY's smaller and less efficient units—assuming that SUNY could retain and redirect the financial resources to strengthen the rest. But at present levels of enrollment, the Commission considers closing one or more SUNY campuses to be a solution whose costs—in reduced student access, as well as in political divisiveness—outweigh the benefits that could be realized. Moreover, to implement such a solution with wisdom in the future, New York state will require a decision-making mechanism that gives greater weight to SUNY's statewide needs and agenda than is presently provided.

Nevertheless, and entirely apart from the demography of the coming decade, the Commission is convinced that New York state has paid a high price for its excessive dispersal of small SUNY campuses throughout the state, which creates diseconomies of scale. The dispersion into many small units has made SUNY costly to operate in the past, and it will make SUNY costly to operate in the future.

Reconsideration of the issue of campus closings will be appropriate in the future. At present, we believe that the priority need is to improve the quality, and the efficiency, of what happens within the buildings, rather than to reduce their number.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

SUNY has a unique opportunity, because it's a unique umbrella organization. SUNY students can move from a community college through a research university. More should be done to benefit from this multifaceted system.

—Barbara Newell,
chancellor, State University
System of Florida

SUNY's 30 community colleges provide broad access to higher learning. Their programs include general studies, career programs, and public service activities, closely tailored to the needs of their sponsoring communities.

At SUNY, community colleges are part of the same statewide system that includes senior campuses, a situation unique to New York. State funds presently average about one-third of the community college budgets; a similar amount is paid by local sponsors, which are typically county governments, and the balance is provided by student tuition. Responsibility for ongoing college management rests primarily with local boards, under broad SUNY policies.

More than once in recent years it has been suggested that it would be "tidier" to reorganize the community colleges as a separate system. Yet, the Commission found that community college administrators, faculty, and students all are strongly in favor of remaining under the SUNY umbrella. Both university policy and state law have given great flexibility to the community colleges. The colleges see a number of key advantages in the present structure, including: 1) better coordination of individual campus interests; 2) sharing of resources, facilities, and information with SUNY senior campuses; and 3) SUNY's guarantee that graduates of community college academic programs can transfer (with appropriate credit) to four-year SUNY campuses. Most of the community college students seek vocational, two-year

degrees, but roughly 14 percent of the graduates transfer to SUNY four-year institutions (and more than 3,000 others annually transfer to SUNY senior institutions before receiving an associate degree).

The Commission believes that ties between SUNY and the community colleges should be strengthened. At present, for example, agreements for the transfer of community college students to SUNY senior campuses are negotiated on a campus-by-campus basis, rather than more broadly. The statewide system provides additional opportunities for SUNY's academic and administrative leadership, a source of potential benefit to the community colleges in addition to SUNY's more passive role as the conduit of state funds.

Some local community colleges report persistent problems in securing local sponsor financial support. In some cases, an appropriate solution may be *regional* community colleges, with sponsors drawn from two or more local areas, and with a strengthened role for a regional board of trustees. In addition, study should be made of the possibility of state-sponsored community colleges in areas with unusually small tax bases; such colleges would receive an increased proportion of state financial support, coupled with an increased number of trustees appointed by the governor.

A significant number of community colleges have encountered at least occasional disagreements among their administrations, governing boards, and local sponsors regarding spheres of authority. In visits to various campuses, the Commission found apprehension regarding potential interference by local boards and county governments in inappropriate areas. There were periodic complaints over political pressures in such matters as purchasing and hiring (especially of nonacademic personnel). During the course of the Commission's inquiry, in fact, re-accreditation of one SUNY community college was deferred by an accrediting association, which stressed that its misgivings lay wholly in the area of governance, not academic shortcomings.

HEALTH SCIENCES CENTERS

The share of SUNY's total budget devoted to hospitals and other health services has increased from 7 percent in 1973 to 17 percent in 1984. SUNY's Upstate Medical Center, located in Syracuse, and its Downstate Medical Center, in Brooklyn, are designated tertiary care facilities for 18 counties with a population of 5.4 million. SUNY also operates a new teaching hospital at Stony Brook and plays an important part in Buffalo's system of health services.

Hospital Operations gained 1,979 positions between 1975 and 1984, while SUNY's count of non-hospital employees at state-operated campuses fell by 3,927. Such trends raise important and complicated questions for SUNY, but this Commission has chosen not to delve into hospital and clinic operations, since they are presently the subject of a separate inquiry being conducted by the university and New York state.

STATUTORY COLLEGES

Financial issues have recently strained the relationship between SUNY and the statutory colleges at Cornell. The next section of this report, covering financial support for SUNY, includes discussion of this subject.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON SUNY'S CONFIGURATION

1. With the possible exception of revisions in the structure of SUNY's health care delivery programs, there should be no major change during the next several years in the types of campuses and programs for which SUNY is responsible. The Commission makes this recommendation because we believe that it is in the interests of the state as a whole for SUNY to maintain a statewide perspective and comprehensive responsibility for the state's efforts in public higher education.

2. As enrollments, required facilities, and resources change in the future, the mix of SUNY's programs will demand continuing scrutiny. SUNY's board of trustees should have the clear responsibility for achieving cooperation among programs at different campuses and integration of programs as required.

3. The central administration should review campus procedures for the justification of all classes with low enrollments. Such justifications should also be reviewed periodically by appropriate campus deans in consultation with vice presidents for academic affairs.

4. To assist the board of trustees' ongoing review of SUNY's configuration, top-level, professional studies should be made to propose plans for a) more efficient use of existing resources; b) downsizing of programs or campuses where necessary and efficient; and c) developing additional practical ways for much greater sharing of specialized facilities among SUNY campuses, including, for example, joint appointments, joint registration, multicampus program sponsorship, and short-term exchanges of faculty members.

5. Where local support or local facilities are inadequate, SUNY should take the lead in encouraging consolidation of community colleges into regional community colleges.

6. The possibility of state-sponsored community colleges as an approach for use in areas with extremely limited tax bases should receive continued study.

7. SUNY should work with state government, community college trustees, and representatives of local campus sponsors to clarify the differences in responsibility among community college governing boards, county governments, and the colleges' executive and faculty leadership.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF SUNY

Starting with a small base, SUNY's annual percentage increases in research funding and in other areas seem impressive, but in total dollars the gap between SUNY's performance and that of other public universities is large and growing larger. Other universities are moving ahead each year. Momentum generates further momentum. The gift or grant that attracts top talent sets the stage for the next grant, the next recruitment effort. Intense competition is a challenge that SUNY must be able to overcome.

There are clear signs of financial stress at SUNY's state-operated campuses:

- Faculty workloads merit concern. Between 1974 and 1983, enrollment at SUNY's state-supported campuses grew by 2,800 students (measured by a full-time equivalent average). Yet the faculty shrank by 750 and the educational support staff declined by 3,663. New York faculty salaries are above the national average in both public and independent sectors, by between 8 percent and 9 percent. But at SUNY, faculty-student ratios have worsened by about 10 percent since 1974. Significantly, a comparison of SUNY with the respected institutions in the American Association of Universities (AAU) shows that the workload at SUNY's university centers is a great deal higher than the average workload in the AAU. High workloads reduce student involvement in learning, obstruct efforts to recruit top faculty, and restrict the time and incentive for research.
- Repeated deferrals of maintenance on SUNY buildings threaten the state's sizable investment in its physical plant. In many cases, research facilities are lacking or outmoded.

Figure 5

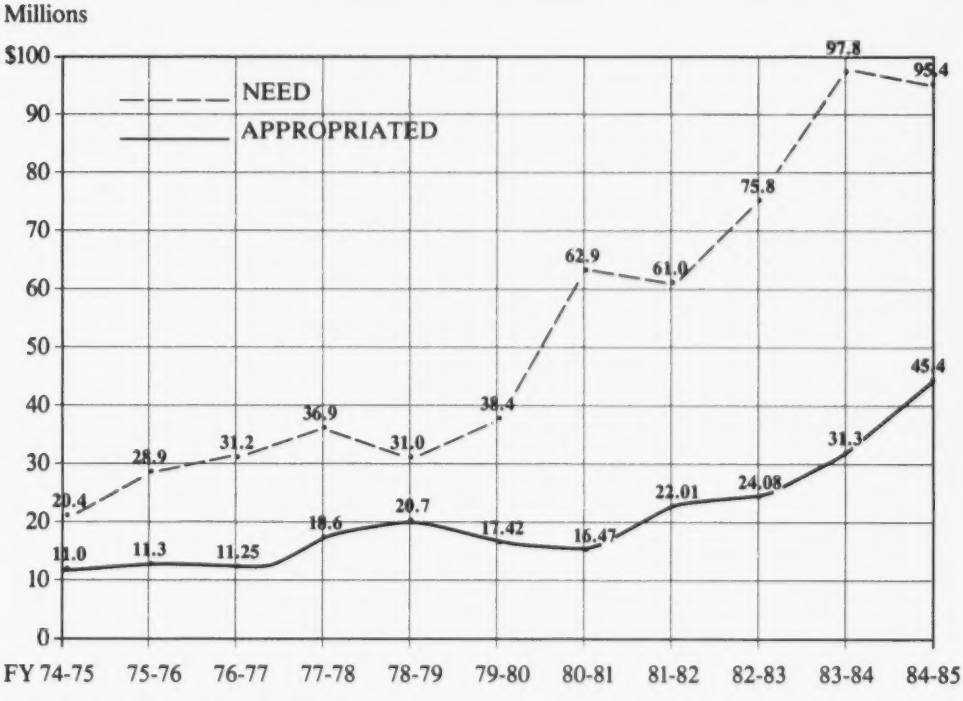
STUDENT CREDIT HOURS PER FACULTY MEMBER: SUNY CENTERS AND THE AAU

	AAU	SUNY
Chemical Engineering	146	302
Electrical Engineering	175	320
Linguistics and Language	146	323
Social Science	283	454
Social Work	148	298

SOURCES: SUNY data, Course and Section Analysis; American Association of Universities' institutions per summary from Michigan State University, Office of Planning and Budgets.

Figure 6

SUNY'S REHABILITATION/REPAIR PROGRAM ACADEMIC & SUPPORT FACILITIES 1974-75 THROUGH 1984-85 (NEED VS. APPROPRIATIONS)



SOURCE: SUNY Office of Capital Facilities.

Concern over levels of funding for facilities and research and frustration at SUNY's inability to procure the needed funds from state government have led Cornell University to advocate virtual severance of the statutory colleges at Cornell from SUNY's structure. The Commission concurs with the *funding* needs identified by Cornell, but we have concluded that needs for modernization of facilities and additional state support as serious as those at Cornell abound throughout the SUNY system.

This Commission does not believe that the solution to the very real concerns of Cornell lies in creation of yet another state mechanism for dealing with the statutory colleges. Rather, the solution lies in an adequate response to the needs of public higher education throughout the SUNY system. The statutory colleges at Cornell, operated by an independent institution, are examples that lend added weight to the repeated requests made in recent years by SUNY's board of trustees for additional modernization of facilities, recovery of deferred funds for plant maintenance, and program enhancement.

FINANCIAL COMPARISONS

In the mid-1970s, little more than a generation after SUNY's creation, SUNY encountered a fiscal shock in the form of New York's financial crisis, a shock from which it hasn't yet recovered. In the years since 1974, state tax support for SUNY has not kept pace with inflation. By 1983-84, the Higher Education Price index, prepared by Research Associates of Washington, had more than doubled. Yet tax support for SUNY's state-operated and statutory campuses had risen only 60 percent, and some of those funds were not available to offset inflation since they were earmarked for new programs.

The most reliable state-by-state comparisons of the financing of higher education are published annually by Kent Halstead of the National Institute of Education.* Halstead's

*Halstead undertook additional analysis and updated the 1983-84 New York data at the request of this Commission.

data provide a mixed picture of New York's present level of funding for current operations of public higher education. The average New York taxpayer pays less for public higher education than do taxpayers in roughly half of the states. In 1983-84, New York's state and local funding for public higher education averaged $116 per citizen,* a figure that places New York below Texas, California, and Wisconsin (and New Mexico, Mississippi, and Kansas), among other states. New York would place even lower if the above ranking were adjusted for cost-of-living differences among states.

Yet, New York's rate of enrollment in the public sector (students *per capita*) is about 18 percent below the national norm. When student load is taken into account, it is clear that New York spends substantially more than average *per student* on public higher education. In 1983-84, New York's state and local appropriations per student for public educational operations, including CUNY, were the sixth highest in the nation, $4,764 per full-time student. This is $914 more than the national average. Academic construction costs at SUNY increase New York's total to $5,164 per student.

One question that naturally occurred to this Commission is Why is SUNY so obviously in need of additional support when New York's per-student appropriation is so much greater than the national average?

There are three answers to this question, and each poses serious issues for the state of New York:

Debt Service

In comparison with other states, New York's state and local appropriations are not as high as they appear. The reason is that SUNY has less tuition revenue available to cover educational operating costs than does any other state system in the U.S. SUNY does collect greater-than-average tuition revenues: net tuition at SUNY's state-operated campuses averaged $1,175 per student in 1983-84.** But most

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*The state and local support totals used in this section, $2.03 billion, include state financial aid to in-state students at public institutions.

**"Net" tuition excludes state aid to in-state students in the public sector; such aid is included above under "appropriations."

of these revenues are used, as required by law, to repay construction debts incurred in the construction of SUNY's academic buildings. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, New York state owes 22 percent of the total indebtedness in the nation incurred for the construction of public university buildings.

Currently, the debt service SUNY must pay averages $1,050 per student at SUNY's state-operated campuses. That leaves SUNY only $125 in net tuition revenue per student to cover current operating costs—an amount lower than that available in Alabama, Mississippi, West Virginia, and every other state system in the U.S. At SUNY, the tuition revenue available for operations is $923 below the national average. Including debt service on academic construction, the total state and local tax appropriation for public higher education is above the national average for operations that Halstead computes by $1,324. But at SUNY, much of the increment—$923 per student—merely offsets the fact that there are atypical prior claims on tuition receipts. Virtually no other state pays for the construction of academic buildings out of university-generated revenues as does New York.*

Scattering the Sites

Another unusual cost factor at SUNY is the multitude of small campuses built throughout the state, primarily in

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* In most other states, appropriations for operations and tuition revenues exclude the impact of debt service on academic buildings, for a variety of reasons. At the University of California, for example, there are *no* charges for debt service on most new academic buildings because the state generally pays for its plant in cash. A similar situation exists in North Carolina, Colorado, and a great many other states.

When a state such as Wisconsin receives $1,100 in tuition, the entire $1,100 is available to cover educational operating costs. Wisconsin *does* pay debt service for the construction of academic buildings, currently $391 per full-time student. But Wisconsin does not draw either on tuition or operations appropriations to pay these costs.

In Florida, debt service on academic buildings is paid for by a state utility tax. Academic construction in California is financed, without incurring debt, by revenues from tidelands oil leasing. New York appears to be unique in the nation in charging its students, and in charging them so much, for the cost of building its academic plant, thereby depriving SUNY's state-operated campuses of the use of most of SUNY's tuition revenue.

response to popular and political pressures. Small campuses have some inherent educational advantages, but they are financially less efficient on a per-student basis. This Commission's review of enrollments in ten large state systems indicates that, in comparable states, the average enrollment per campus is 9,094; at SUNY's state-operated campuses, the average is 4,710, or just 52 percent of the average for other large states. This helps to explain why SUNY's operational expenditures per student are considerably above national averages for public education (although below those of the independent sector in New York).

Both the debt service and SUNY's multitude of small campuses are continuing costs of decisions made by the state as SUNY developed. While we recognize the impact of these unusual costs on public education in New York, this Commission believes it is poor policy to debit today's research and educational activities to pay for New York's historic delay in creating SUNY, and to pay for dispersing SUNY into many small units. These were decisions of the state as a whole. Therefore, this Commission believes that these costs should be borne by the state as a whole, not by the present and future generations of students and scholars. The path to the future is not traversed merely by paying past debts. Today, the priority need is upgrading the research and educational programs that take place within SUNY's buildings. These efforts are the reason that the high debt service and the dispersed campus structure were created in the first place.

SUNY'S Institutional Context

Another contributor to SUNY's high cost per student is the millions of dollars in administrative time and personnel costs that SUNY must spend on other than educational issues. This cost is atypical, and the Commission judges it to be substantial. John Whitehead, senior partner at Goldman, Sachs & Co., makes the point as follows: "The kind of restraints that exist now lead to wasteful expenditures and terrible ineffeciencies. If these are eliminated, it will save money as well as improve the education" that SUNY provides.

Fortunately, the enrollment declines anticipated in the next ten years mean that it will be possible to enhance SUNY without the pain of adding a full dollar of appropriations above today's level for each dollar spent on enhancement. As long as appropriations do not decline in lockstep with enrollment, SUNY and New York state will have a much-needed opportunity to spend more *per student* without dollar-for-dollar increases in total funding levels.

Figure 7

SUNY ENROLLMENT

	State Operated Institutions	Community Colleges	Total
1983	193,230	188,538	381,768
1982	196,034	182,136	378,170
1981	198,150	181,591	379,741
1980	198,723	173,692	372,415
1979	191,200	165,508	356,708
1978	188,416	159,945	348,361
1977	187,850	156,096	343,946
1976	191,539	151,316	342,855
1975	200,999	156,615	357,614
1974	189,450	135,795	325,245

SOURCE: SUNY Office of Institutional Research.

PRIVATE SUPPORT

Nationally, private philanthropy to public universities and colleges now exceeds $1.3 billion annually. Between 1982 and 1983, such giving increased at an annual rate above 15 percent.

The University of California raised $135.8 million in 1982-83, followed by the University of Texas, which raised

$107.7 million. The University of Minnesota raised $62.7 million, and the University of Michigan reported $50.6 million. Taken as a whole, the comparable figure for the SUNY state-operated campuses was $21.1 million; for the four SUNY university centers it was $10.5 million. In a sense, the comparison is not a fair one because, as a young system, SUNY's base of older, affluent alumni, an important source of private donations, is much smaller than that of century-old institutions. SUNY's efforts in securing voluntary support began relatively recently at the urging of SUNY's chancellor. The state authorized the hiring of development officers at SUNY campuses in 1982, and voluntary support for SUNY grew by 240 percent between 1980 and 1983.

One handicap for SUNY here is concern by potential donors that their gifts will not lead to enhancement but will merely substitute for regular state obligations. Under the present appropriations process, it is more difficult than it should be for SUNY to offer the required assurances to private donors.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON FINANCE

1. Because results are more important than use of any single numeric formula, appropriations for SUNY should be adjusted to meet SUNY's specific needs. These include deferred rehabilitation and repair of facilities (a category that by 1984 had grown, disturbingly, to $95.4 million for academic and support facilities, and $55 million for residential facilities), enhancement of research, recruitment of outstanding faculty members, recruitment of outstanding students both in state and out of state, reduction of faculty workloads, and enhancement of educational programs.

2. Nationally, the average percentage of state and local tax revenues devoted to public higher education operations was 10.2 percent in 1983-84. In New York, it was 6.7 percent. Although use of any single benchmark can be misleading, New York state should seek, as a goal, to equal or exceed the national average in the percentage of state and local tax revenues provided to public higher education for current operations, with appropriate adjustments. The adjustments we suggest are the following: a) a reduction to account for New York's lower than average participation *per capita* in public higher education; b) an increase to reflect SUNY's youth and need to catch up; and c) an increase to reflect the increased costs resulting from the over-scattering of SUNY's sites and the debt service costs that result from building a statewide plant in a compressed period of time.

3. Neither increases nor declines in enrollment should be used as the sole or primary basis for budgetary assessment of the needs and funding of public higher education. Such measures ignore economies of scale that can occur when additional students are added. They ignore fixed costs that do not decrease when enrollment declines. And they ignore changes in the mix of educational programs and needs that will occur irrespective of gross enrollment totals, such as the needs resulting from SUNY's unfinished evolution.

In particular, enrollment declines that occur between now and the mid-1990s should not be met by dollar-for-dollar cuts in levels of public support. Funding levels for SUNY must be considered in the light of New York's need for improving the quality of SUNY, the fixed costs of SUNY, and the expectation that enrollment will begin to increase during the 1990s.

4. In the coming decade, there will be a need to eliminate some programs and to refocus campus missions within the SUNY system. It is imperative that any required financial cutbacks not be made across the board. To do so is to abdicate responsibility for educational quality. Instead, any required cutbacks should be made selectively. This enormous system is subject to constant change, resulting from changes in demography, students' choice of majors, competitive pressures generated by other public systems, federal funding trends, and academic priorities. The trustees of SUNY should have the clear authority and undivided responsibility to balance quality, access, and statewide need within SUNY, as adjustments become necessary.

5. To the maximum extent possible, future expenditures for campus construction should be funded without resort to increased debt obligations; failing this, repayment of new debt incurred in the construction of academic facilities should be charged against state revenues other than tuition.

6. A "cap" on construction debt currently limits SUNY's indebtedness to $3 billion. Outstanding debt now totals $2.2 billion, down from a high of $2.6 billion. Should the current practice of funding capital investment continue, language defining the "cap" should be amended to limit SUNY's "outstanding" obligations, rather than its "issued" obligations; the point is to allow SUNY to incur new debt as old debt is retired, up to the limit of the "cap."

7. Projections should be made of funds to be freed over time as academic construction debts are retired. In the future, support levels for SUNY should be defined explicitly to allow such "freed" amounts, or funds that formerly went to retire academic construction debts, to be used as additional, supplemental support for SUNY operations, in excess of present funding levels.

8. New York state and SUNY should work to strengthen SUNY's ability to assure donors of voluntary contributions that their gifts will be used for enrichment as intended rather than as replacements for state support.

9. SUNY should continue to strengthen development efforts among the university's one million alumni, as well as among the philanthropic and business communities.

CONCLUSION

Campuses do not exist to be administered. They exist to provide an exciting environment for learning and the sharing of knowledge, to train professionals, to make discoveries. Every policy, act, rule, and regulation affecting SUNY ought to be measured by its impact, for better or worse, on the individual campus and ultimately on the individual faculty member and student. The most important test is whether the individual is helped or hindered in the adventure of learning. Above all, we have recommended restructuring SUNY as a public benefit corporation to enable New York and SUNY to meet this essential test.

The State University of New York is a complex organization that has now evolved over 36 years. Today it serves a large number of audiences, each of which has its own view of what it is, can be, and should be. Realistically, SUNY today is what New Yorkers have made it. What it becomes tomorrow depends likewise on their interests and their will.

APPENDIX

Following is a list of individuals interviewed, or heard, by members of the Independent Commission on the Future of the State University in personal meetings, public hearings and campus visits.

INTERVIEWEES

Robert Abrams
New York State Attorney General

Judge Samuel C. Alessi
President, Association of Boards of Trustees of Community Colleges

Gordon M. Ambach
Commissioner, New York State Education Department

Warren Anderson
New York State Senator, Majority Leader

Mary Ann McLean-Austen
Assistant to Senator Kenneth LaValle

Mario M. Cuomo
Governor, State of New York

Michael J. DelGiudice
Secretary to the Governor, Governor's Office

Angelo Del Toro
New York State Assemblyman,
Chairman, Black and Hispanic Committee

Wayne R. Diesel
First Deputy Director, New York State Division of the Budget

Henrik N. Dullea
Director of State Operations, Governor's Office

Donald G. Dunn
First Deputy Comptroller, New York State Office of the Comptroller

John C. Egan
Commissioner, New York State Office of General Services

Arthur O. Eve
New York State Assemblyman, Deputy Speaker of the Assembly

Stanley Fink
New York State Assemblyman, Speaker of the Assembly

Michael Finnerty
Director, New York State Division of the Budget

Joseph Flynn
SUNY Professor, President, State University of New York
Faculty Senate

Willard A. Genrich
Chairman, New York State Board of Regents

Harold Hanson
President, State University of New York Confederation of Alumni Associations

Thomas F. Hartnett
Director, Governor's Office of Employee Relations

Arthur Kremer
New York State Assemblyman,
Chairman, Ways and Means Committee

Kenneth LaValle
New York State Senator
Chairman, Higher Education Committee

Richard Leckerling
Assistant to Assemblyman Mark Siegel

Robert Lowry
Assistant to Assemblyman Mark Siegel

John Marchi
New York State Senator
Chairman, New York State Senate Finance Committee

Anthony Mastrioanni
President, Association of Council Members and College Trustees

Nuala McGann-Drescher
President, United University Professions

Susan Mitnick
Senate Finance Minority Staff

John Morris
President, Union College and Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities

James Murphy
Chancellor, City University of New York

Joseph Murphy
Chairman, Board of Trustees, City University of New York

Donald J. Nolan
Deputy Commissioner for Higher and Professional Education, New York State Education Department

Manfred Ohrenstein
New York State Senator, Minority Leader

Clarence D. Rappleyea
New York State Assemblyman, Minority Leader

Edward V. Regan
Comptroller, State of New York

James Ruhl
Assistant Program Secretary to Senator Anderson

Jo Ann Ryan
Legislative Analyst re Higher Education Issues

Raymond T. Schuler
President, Business Council of State of New York, Inc.

Mark Siegel
New York State Assemblyman,
Chairman, State Assembly Higher Education Committee

Gerald Smith
President, Faculty Council Community Colleges

James Tierney
President, Student Assembly

Susan Tyler
Deputy Director, New York State Division of the Budget

PUBLIC HEARING PARTICIPANTS

Debbie Abrahams
Director, External Affairs
Student Association, State University at Buffalo

Suzy Auletta
Vice President, Student Association, State University at Albany

Frederico Azcarate
Academic Vice President, Student Association, State University at Buffalo

Cecilia Brown
Fashion Institute of Technology

Alice Chandler
President, State University College at New Paltz
(Representing Arts and Science Colleges)

Clifford D. Clark
President, State University at Binghamton (Representing University Centers)

John Crawford
State University at Buffalo, Graduate Student President

Sean A. Fanelli
President, Nassau Community College

Marvin Feldman
President, Fashion Institute of Technology, (Testifying as President of the Association of Presidents of Public Community Colleges)

Sheldon N. Grebstein
President, State University College at Purchase

Nathaniel Hendricks
New York Public Interest Research Group

Richard V. Horan
President, Citizen's Public Expenditure Survey, Inc. of New York State

Lois Isaacson
Student Association, State University at Albany

Margie Leffler
President, Student Association, State University at Binghamton

Karen Markoe
Professor of History, Maritime College

Lynn King Morris
Director of Foreign and Student Affairs, State University at Stony Brook

Jane F. McAlevey
President, Student Association, State University at Buffalo

Earl W. McArthur
President, Agricultural and Technical College at Canton (Representing Agricultural and Technical Colleges)

Nuala McGann-Drescher
President, United University Professions

Troy Oechsner
Student Association, State University at Albany

Vincent O'Leary
President, State University at Albany

Judith Parkas
Faculty Member, Fashion Institute of Technology
Executive Vice President NYSUT #3457

Steven H. Sample
President, State University at Buffalo

Tom Swan
Vice President for Campus Affairs of Student Assembly

Spencer Weissbroth
State University College at Plattsburgh

Susan Wray
Student Association, State University at Albany

Paul F. Zimmerman
Government Relations, New York Farm Bureau, Glenmont, New York

Zoe Zacharek
Graduate Student Employees Union at State University at Buffalo

CAMPUS VISITS

A total of 18 campuses were visited by members of The Independent Commission on the Future of the State University and staff personnel.

In attendance at these visits were the campus presidents, and representatives of various campus and community constituencies.

The following campuses were visited:

UNIVERSITY CENTERS
State University at Buffalo
State University at Stony Brook

MEDICAL CENTERS
Upstate Medical Center

ARTS AND SCIENCE
College at Cortland
College at Old Westbury
College at Buffalo

SPECIALIZED COLLEGES
College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Maritime College
College of Optometry

STATUTORY COLLEGES
Cornell University
- Agriculture and Life Sciences
- Veterinary Medicine
- School of Industrial and Labor Relations
- Human Ecology

COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Broome Community College
Fashion Institute of Technology

AGRICULTURAL AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES
Farmingdale Agricultural and Technical College
Morrisville Agricultural and Technical College

AND

SUNY Central Administration, Albany, New York